CASPER, WYOMING
TRIBUNE-HERALD

EVENING 14,392
SUNDAY   17,526

MAY 1 1961

EDITORIALS

Loose Daggers

The Central Intelligence Agency is this county's first experience in the cloak-and-dagger business, and it is turning out to be a not-too-happy one. Anyway, it is charged that CIA blundering had a good deal to do with the Cuban disaster.

The agency denies it, and President Kennedy has commissioned retired Gen. Maxwell Taylor to find out. That, in itself, is a change in direction.

From its inception, CIA has been so hush-hush that not even Congress has been allowed to get a full picture of it. Its appropriations are broken down and scattered through numerous bill to prevent any educated guessing as to the uses to which the funds are put, and thus, the activities of the agency.

So CIA has become a very secret and very powerful organization accountable only to itself.

It is also a very large organization, and there is some evidence that it may be working at cross purposes, within itself, and within the broad policy lines of government.

Now, it must be conceded that a super-intelligence agency cannot operate in a fish bowl. Cloaks and daggers conjure up shadowy darkness and mysterious goings-on. The public can't expect and doesn't hope to glimpse a fleeting preview of this business.

But the public can rightly demand that an agency whose activities have direct bearing on its highest interests should be made accountable.

Frequently in the past it has been proposed that Congress establish a watch-dog committee to oversee CIA, much along the lines of the Atomic Energy Committee. Always the objection has been offered that this would be risky business in that someone might inadvertently let out some of CIA's secrets.

But is there any reason to believe that a few members of Congress would offer any greater risk in this respect than some of the high-placed officials of the agency itself?

And what is to be said of a secret government agency that is forever self-evaluating?

Congress has a responsibility too long ignored.